

## Accountability and opposition to globalization in international assemblies

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Article

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## Abstract

Advocates of a global democratic parliament have expressed hopes that this would not only legitimize global governance in procedural terms, but also bring about more cosmopolitan policies. They point to the European Parliament as an example of a successful real existing democratic parliament beyond the state with cosmopolitan intent. We analyse plenary debates in the United Nations General Assembly and the European Parliament about the issues of climate change, human rights, migration, trade and European integration between 2004 and 2011 to study the nature of opposition to cosmopolitanism within these two assemblies. We find more vocal and better-organized opposition to cosmopolitanism in the European Parliament than in the United Nations General Assembly. We demonstrate the plausibility that direct and more proportional mechanisms of delegation and accountability in the case of the European Parliament account for this observed difference. Should further research confirm these initial findings, advocates of a global democratic parliament may find that an empowered democratic World Parliament would support less cosmopolitan policies than the current United Nations General Assembly.

## Keywords

Claims analysis, cleavage, cosmopolitanism, European Parliament, globalization, United Nations General Assembly

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## Introduction

Advocates of a global democratic parliament point out that many of the protests against globalization derive from dissatisfaction with the lack of democratic legitimacy of global governance (Archibugi, 2010; Archibugi and Held, 1995; Falk and Strauss, 2001). These protests from the Left, but also anti-globalization movements of the Right, could be accommodated if citizens had a better say in world politics. The increasing ‘politicization’ of international organizations due to their rising authority (Zürn et al., 2012) might thus be matched by increasing democratic legitimacy.

At the same time, there is the hope that a genuinely global parliament could be a champion of more cosmopolitan policies that take the individual human being — wherever he or she may be — as the ultimate unit of moral concern (Nussbaum, 2010; Pogge, 1992). Such a universalist and individualist world view fosters demands for policies that, in one way or another, imply an integration of formerly national societies — for example, through the enforcement of human rights across the globe, through protecting the global environment and combating climate change, or by welcoming the free movement of people across borders for political or economic reasons.

Those campaigning for a global parliament as the would-be champion of human rights and sustainable development, like the ‘Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly’ (UNPA, 2015) or ‘World Parliament’ (WP, 2015), imply that the two quests of global democracy and cosmopolitan policies will easily go hand in hand. As political scientists, we can question this underlying assumption. What would happen if we were to create a democratic World Parliament or democratize the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)? Will it, indeed, become a champion of cosmopolitan policies as the advocates hope? Unfortunately, no neat empirical answer lies readily available to these big counterfactual questions. However, we can look to existing institutions and ask what their workings may tell us about the potential of a global parliament.

Against sceptics (e.g. Dahl, 1999), cosmopolitan democrats point to the success story of the European Parliament (EP) as a democratic assembly beyond the state (Archibugi, 1995: 139; Falk and Strauss, 2001: 217). Our research empirically probes this alleged success. To get a glimpse of a likely scenario regarding a global parliament, we set out to compare the currently existing UNGA, as the closest proxy to a global assembly, to the EP, as the currently best-established democratic assembly beyond the state. We draw on cleavage literature documenting a growing divide between cosmopolitan advocates of globalization and their various communitarian opponents, and relate this to global governance. We thus analyse whether democratic mechanisms may affect the conflict patterns between cosmopolitans and their opponents, assuming that this also affects the nature of the policies that international organizations adopt. To enable empirical research, we ask, first, to what extent international assemblies feature conflict between cosmopolitans and their opponents. Second, we investigate what effects democratic mechanisms of accountability and proportionality have on this conflict. More precisely, we analyse debates and claims-making about globalization issues within the UNGA and the EP, and the patterns of conflict formation therein.

The next section presents our theoretical underpinning at the intersection of the literatures on cleavages and on global democracy. It formulates four expectations that inform

our empirical analysis. These expectations posit, first, the mobilization of a cleavage dividing cosmopolitan and opposing communitarian positions. Second, following Zürn (2014), we expect to find a cosmopolitan bias dominating in international assemblies on this division. Third, based on principal–agent theory, we argue that accountability mechanisms affect the force of this bias. Fourth, and finally, we posit that the proportionality in the election system is a second factor affecting the balance between cosmopolitan and communitarian positions. Subsequently, the research design and our method of claims analysis are explained. The results presented in the next section lend support to these four expectations, though the degree of cleavage mobilization varies in the two assemblies. Finally, we discuss the limitations of our research design before drawing conclusions and discussing their implications for cosmopolitan democracy. This certainly does not provide a definitive answer to the big question of whether an empowered and democratized World Parliament would turn out to be a force for cosmopolitan policies — such as protecting human rights and the global environment — but it does provide a thoroughly grounded piece of the puzzle.

## Theory

This section focuses on manifestations of cleavage formation within international assemblies. The logic behind this is simple. We assume that the cosmopolitan nature of policies adopted or supported by international assemblies depends on the weakness of opposition to them within these assemblies. The more numerous and the more coherent or organized opposition to cosmopolitanism is in international assemblies, the less cosmopolitan the policies supported by this assembly will be. We thus approach the question of whether a global parliament will further the cosmopolitan cause by empirically gauging the manifestation of cleavage formation within assemblies. First, this section posits the possibility of the development of a cosmopolitan versus communitarian cleavage around globalization issues. Second, it introduces transnational parliaments as a forum for manifesting this cleavage in the form of speech acts. Third, our four expectations on how the cleavage plays out at this level are formulated, including the expected effects of accountability mechanisms and proportionality in the election system.

### *A globalization cleavage?*

Issues of globalization, defined as exchanges of goods, services, people, political authority and norms across borders (Held et al., 1999), are a major bone of contention. The terms of cooperation have to be negotiated, and not everyone is convinced that the benefits provided by open borders in terms of consumption, travel, prosperity or otherwise outweigh the costs in terms of job insecurity, international crime, loss of cultural distinctiveness and loss of sovereignty. Western Europe, where countries rank among the most open and internationally interwoven (Dreher et al., 2008), features a growing division between winners and losers of globalization. It pits those favouring international integration against those favouring the demarcation of the nation-state (Kriesi et al., 2008). Once these conflict lines in society translate into politics in the form of politically mobilized dividing lines (Bartolini, 2000: 19), we can speak of a ‘cleavage’ (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). We suggest that the

conflict between advocates and critics of open borders extends far beyond a narrow economic understanding of globalization. Rather, it constitutes a cleavage encompassing many issues surrounding transactions, movements and communication more broadly. In particular, the issues of immigration and European integration form the backbone of this cleavage within Western European societies, with citizens who oppose both clearly distinguishable from those supporting them (Kriesi et al., 2008, 2012). On first analysis, this cleavage cannot be neatly accommodated in other cleavages based on class or religion. We suggest that it may serve as the basis for a new, distinct cleavage, which develops along the lines of *cosmopolitan* and *communitarian* inclinations. Whereas *cosmopolitans* clearly emphasize rights and inclusion beyond nation-state borders based on a universal and generic understanding of individuals as units of moral concern, communitarians insist on the importance of the community for the entitlement to rights and the acknowledgement of a heterogeneous world with morally meaningful boundaries (Brown, 1992; Zürn, 2014: 64). That is, while communitarian critics of globalization may come in various guises, they consider the social surrounding of the individual as essential to his or her identity, and their beliefs of what is just are bound to specific communities. Hence, the realization of justice becomes restricted to these communities that delimit identities and beliefs (Sandel, 1998 [1982]; Walzer, 1983). While, in Europe, communitarianism may often be synonymous with nationalism (Bauman, 1995), there are forms of opposition to globalization that do not take the nation as a container of justice. The Mexican Zapatistas, for example, campaigned as much against the Mexican government as they did against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Islamists aiming to unite the ummah do not care much for nationality either (Castells, 2010). We therefore rely on the labels of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism — rather than nationalism (Kriesi et al., 2012) or sovereigntism (Azmanova, 2011) — to capture the advocates of globalization and their various opponents (cf. Zürn and De Wilde, 2013). If, indeed, a globalization cleavage is in the making, and opposing views in society are politically mobilized by opposing elite factions, these can be expected to unfold at different levels (Zürn, 2014). Hence, based on the hypothesis of a globalization cleavage, we would expect to find evidence of controversial debate and opposing coalition formation within international assemblies. This is the subject of this article.

### *The role of transnational parliaments in cleavage mobilization*

International assemblies, such as the UNGA or the EP, are key institutions in international organizations (Grant and Keohane, 2005: 37). These assemblies combine functions of public deliberation in terms of the open and publicly voiced<sup>1</sup> exchanges of positions on issues by a variety of representatives with (limited) decision-making powers. On budgetary matters, for example, assemblies tend to have a veto power and the EP's powers extend considerably beyond that (Rittberger, 2005). In this sense of combining public deliberation with decision-making, these institutions can be understood as 'strong publics' (Fraser, 1992: 134) that function as platforms of public preference formation and aggregation, on the one hand, and as intermediaries between institutions with executive powers and the wider audience, on the other. With citizens increasingly interested in and divided over globalization issues (Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2011), assemblies present a pivotal arena for reflecting societal conflict and, thus, cleavage mobilization

at the international level. Therefore, they are important arenas to assess the existence of cosmopolitan discourse, conflict and anti-globalization voice in global governance.

In terms of voting patterns, the literature has already documented clear patterns of conflict in the UNGA (Voeten, 2000) and the EP (Hix et al., 2006), but much less is known about what is said in the plenary debates (but see Binder and Heupel, 2014; Lord and Tamvaki, 2013). Speech acts in international assemblies are a potent source of information to assess if and how citizens' preferences are reflected on the international level. Representatives may use public speech acts to argue their cases, shape international norms and garner outside support for their policies. Even if plenary statements include 'generous doses of posturing and pretense' (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 2004: 263), they contribute to the establishment of public discourse, setting the limits of what are generally acceptable norms (Risse, 2000), and may lead to 'rhetorical entrapment' (Schimmelfennig, 2001). Our research seeks to make these verbalized positions by representatives in international assemblies accessible with respect to a cleavage along cosmopolitan and communitarian division lines.

### *Formulation of expectations*

It is by no means straightforward *how* division lines on globalization translate to debates in international assemblies. The cleavage could unfold in similar ways at different levels (Zürn, 2014: 65). In that case, we would find opponents and proponents of globalization among national and international elites as we do among citizens. On the other hand, it has been argued that the conflict between cosmopolitans and communitarians essentially approximates an elite–mass divide (Teney and Helbling, 2014), where elites form a consensual block in favour of more integration (Calhoun, 2002) and masses oppose it. If this holds true, we should find a more consensual debate in the plenaries of international assemblies praising and advocating globalization since all representatives within them belong to this international elite. This may be explained by a socializing effect of the international environment in which representatives operate (Checkel, 1998), especially when they are institutionally mandated to foster global (or regional) cooperation. It may also be explained by the elites pursuing their own rational interests as highly educated, affluent, multilingual individuals ideally placed to reap the benefits provided by globalization. Either way, it is plausible that representatives operating within international organizations have cosmopolitan preferences. Furthermore, it can be expected that the more leeway these parliamentarians have to defend their own positions unchecked by citizens, the more cosmopolitan bias should become manifest in the assemblies. This expectation is related to principal–agent theory in predicting that representatives in international assemblies pursue their own cosmopolitan preferences, unless delegation and accountability mechanisms that force them to represent the interests of their constituencies are in place (McCubbins et al., 1987; Pollack, 1997). If representatives face the prospect of electoral punishment, they can be expected to deviate less from the preferences of their constituencies. They will then represent the more communitarian preferences that the majority of global citizens hold (Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2014; Furia, 2005).

How these mechanisms play out is an important question for the potential of creating a democratic global parliament. If plenary debate adequately reflects societal divisions,

then democratizing the UNGA is not likely to change the balance on this cleavage. The divided elite will then remain divided. If, however, international assemblies feature a cosmopolitan elitist bias unless forced to represent communitarian positions through mechanisms of delegation and accountability, then democratizing them should fundamentally alter the balance of power between cosmopolitan voice and its opposition.

## Data and method

This section explains our case selection of the EP and the UNGA, and the sampling of debates in five policy areas. Subsequently, we explain our claims analysis method of data collection and the choice for weighted metric multidimensional unfolding (WMMDU) to gauge dimensionality in these issues and how representatives relate to it.

### *Case selection: Approximating two international assemblies*

We study public plenary debates on globalization issues within the UNGA and in the EP. Each forum is the central public deliberative organ of their respective institutional frameworks. The proceedings of both institutions are publically available online, including literal transcripts of debates, adopted resolutions and the voting behaviour of representatives. Finally, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) both deal with a wide variety of policy issues related to the phenomenon of globalization (Hooghe and Marks, 2014). If there is either cleavage formation or elite consensus emerging beyond the state, we expect it to be observable in the debates within these two assemblies.

Yet, although they are both strong publics beyond the state attached to influential governance frameworks, the UNGA and the EP differ strongly. They display ample variance in the scope of policy issues that are discussed and voted on, powers vis-à-vis the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General or the European Council and the European Commission, and on delegation mechanisms. First, the regional scope of the EP involves a group of relatively homogeneous member states, which are all developed, advanced, industrialized Western democracies. None of them are likely to suppress globalization conflict through authoritarian means from finding democratic expression, and such standards of democracy likely facilitate — or at least do not inhibit — the manifestation of conflict at the supranational level. The UN's membership is heterogeneous, including democracies and authoritarian states, rich and poor, deeply internationalized open societies and autarkic states. Even if there is societal conflict about globalization in all UN member states, it is likely that some countries suppress it from manifesting itself in public debates. Second, the UNGA and the EP differ in formal powers. The EP holds major decision-making power in the European legislative process, even more so after the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009 (Hofmann, 2009). The UNGA's central task, in contrast, is to create an international deliberative space. Its adopted resolutions are not legally binding. Nevertheless, it also has decision-making power with regard to the UN budget and other formalities, such as the establishment of new UN bodies. Despite its non-binding resolutions and the representation of each state by one single government delegate, the UNGA comes closest to the ideal of a representative democratic institution at the global level (Peterson, 2007: 98). Its authority can best be understood in



relation to its political impact as a communication forum (Heideking, 2000: 182). Third, both institutions differ strongly in their delegation and accountability mechanisms. While the EP is composed of representatives directly elected by European citizens based on the principle of digressive proportionality, the UNGA features one single diplomatic representative per member state, delegated by the respective governments. Consequently, the chains of delegation and, hence, links to citizens are much more distant in the case of the UNGA than in the case of the EP. Moreover, due to proportional representation, there is more heterogeneity in the political spectrum in the EP, with political parties that are domestically in opposition — absent in the UNGA — strongly present.

A democratic World Parliament would likely be closer to the current EP in two respects out of these three key differences between the UNGA and the EP. First, it would likely have more powers than the current UNGA. Second, it would feature more plural and direct representation through the election or selection of multiple representatives per state, while, however, the degree of proportionality is an open question of institutional design.

### *Sampling of debates on five policy issues*

In order to analyse the presence and strength of cosmopolitan positions and conflict with anti-globalization voice, we chose a variety of policy issues all related to the wider debate on globalization. Each of our chosen issue areas signifies a very different aspect of globalization: climate change, human rights, migration and trade. In the case of the EP, we also include the issue of European integration since it is regarded as a central component of the globalization cleavage in Europe (cf. Kriesi et al., 2012). While these issues vastly differ in terms of complexity, the nature of the societal problem and the degrees of established global governance, they each relate to a different commodity that crosses state borders: pollutants, norms, people, goods and political authority, respectively. Preferences on these issues can, hence, either support open borders, international integration and the application of international norms and responsibility, or support the closure of borders, autarky or a retraction from international norms (Held et al., 1999; Zürn, 1998).

For the analysis, documents were sampled with keyword searches on the issue areas in the online archives of the UNGA and the EP. Documents were chosen at random from the hits for each year so as to ensure an equal distribution across time. The result was a sample aiming to avoid a bias in the claims stemming from the dominance of a specific event in a particular year. The time frame of the analysis (2004–2011) was selected to include two different legislative periods (before and after the 2009 elections) in the EP. Consequently, it reduces the impact of the specific composition of the EP on the results of the analysis, as well as diversifying partisan influence. In the case of the UNGA, the chosen time frame also has the advantage of including speeches made by different governments of the same country in some cases. This reduces the influence of a single party on the positions of a state uttered in the UNGA.

### *Claims as units of analysis*

The chosen method of claims analysis (Koopmans and Statham, 1999) provides us with the opportunity to map positions by UNGA and EP representatives in the sampled debates in a comparative fashion. Generally, a claim is defined as a:

unit of strategic action in the public sphere which articulate[s] political demands, decisions, implementations, calls to action, proposals, criticisms, or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors in a policy field. (Statham, 2005: 12)

A total of 2038 claims made by representatives of both institutions were analysed, with 1293 claims made in the EP and 745 made in the UNGA (for a complete overview of the data set, sampling strategy, coding instructions and intercoder reliability, see De Wilde et al., 2014). The method of claims analysis has the advantage that it systematically opens up the possibility of focusing on the relationship between the actors and the position taken in a specific issue area. While some information that cannot be transferred into an a priori existing coding scheme is lost, the method allows for the aggregation of qualitative information in rigorous fashion, given a clear research question and respectively chosen codes. In the analysis to assess the relationship between transnational representatives and the position they articulate in the four issue areas, we code: WHO is making the claim (claimant: function, nationality and party affiliation); WHAT topic is being discussed (issue); and the claimant's POSITION on this issue (position) (cf. De Wilde, 2011: 678).

In order to ensure the replicability of the analysis and the reliability of the results, intercoder reliability tests were performed. For each of the potential claims, the majority was taken as the norm and the minority as deviation. Of the total 637 decisions, 146 were minority decisions. This corresponds to a unitizing reliability correlation of .88, which clearly meets reliability requirements. The reliability of all variables used in the analysis is well above a threshold of agreement of .7 (Lombard et al., 2002: 593).

We focus on *position* as the central variable to identify the political demands of claimants with regard to the opening or closure of borders in the particular issue area in order to map the existence of cosmopolitan versus communitarian conflict, and possible coalition and cleavage formation. An 'integrate' position indicates that the claimant is supporting further integration in the issue area relative to the status quo, and either demands the opening of borders or wants to preserve the already open borders. An example would be a claim made by the Member of the European Parliament (MEP), Roselyne Lefrancois: 'I would like to say a few words about our future action on immigration. ... I hope that the political will to support a welcoming Europe will be as strong as it was to defend fortress Europe' (MEP Lefrancois, quoted in European Parliament, 2008). This claim indicates the respective issue area that the claimant is referring to — 'migration' — and the direction of the political demand made by the claimant — 'support a welcoming Europe' — as advocating integration. Integration, in this sense, encompasses any kind of interaction facilitating the free flow of people, goods, norms or mitigation measures against pollutants; it can encompass legal agreements, the negotiation of common standards and policies, or adherence to any kind of internationally accepted institution, as well as participation in international organizations. A preference for such integration logically follows from a moral cosmopolitan position, understanding each human individual as equal because they should then be universally enabled to enjoy the opportunities of globalization (like the opportunity to migrate or to trade) and globally protected

from its adverse effects (like global warming).<sup>2</sup> Demarcation advocates denounce cross-border cooperation and integration, or defend a non-integrated status quo, for example: ‘The UK Independence Party will re-establish Britain’s border controls and take back the right to say who shall enter our country’ (MEP Clark, quoted in European Parliament, 2004). This, too, is a claim on migration — ‘who shall enter the country’ — and clearly opposes the existing openness of the UK’s borders through a call to ‘re-establish Britain’s border controls’, therefore advocating demarcation. Such demarcation claims imply a reassertion of sovereignty bound to territorially restricted areas, such as the nation-state or a specific region.

When a claim does not include a clear policy preference in terms of integration or demarcation, we used a third intermediary code of ‘problem’, which signifies that the claimant identifies the issue as of major societal importance to be addressed but does not indicate a clear direction with regard to the openness of borders, for example: ‘The global physical environment continues to deteriorate, with increasing evidence that climate change is reaching a tipping point, with potentially devastating consequences for the world’s poor’ (UNGA Representative of Lithuania, quoted in United Nations, 2007: 3). The mere mentioning of an existing problem, ‘climate change’ and the reference to ‘consequences’ signifies that Lithuania considers this an issue deserving of attention but does not point to more concerted (integration) or more demarcated action in response to the identified problem. Hence, the position is coded as ‘problem’. It follows that the ordinal position variable contains three categories: *integrate* (pro-permeable borders), *problem* (demand for attention, without direction) and *demarcate* (pro-closed borders).<sup>3</sup> For more detailed information about the coding categories, instructions and additional examples, please see our online codebook (De Wilde et al. 2014).

### *Mapping potential cleavage patterns using multidimensional unfolding*

To investigate the existence of cleavages and cleavage coalitions in both forums, we conduct WMMDU. Such a technique allows the dimensional mapping of ‘distances’ between two different units (Borg and Groenen, 2005) — in our case, representatives and their claims on the five issues. It is a variant of multidimensional scaling (MDS) techniques, where unfolding is used for distance matrices between unequal objects (claimants and issues, in our case), while MDS is used for symmetrical matrices between the same objects (e.g. claimants and other claimants). Since we measure the distance between claimants and issues, unfolding — rather than scaling — is the right method.

First, we aggregated the claims data to the level of country in the UNGA and the combination of country and party family in the EP, calculating mean positions from +1 (integration) to −1 (demarcation) per issue. These were then converted into proximities to the ultimate integrationist and demarcationist poles. In the analysis, distances to issue poles are weighted by the amount of claims each claimant makes on that issue, where the same number is taken for integrationist and demarcationist pole proximities. The weighting means that claimants with more claims have a higher impact on the solution, reflecting their stronger influence — in simple quantitative terms — on the overall discourse. Furthermore, the issues on which these claimants make many claims also have a stronger

effect on the solution, reflecting the difference in salience among the issues overall, and the difference in salience of issues to different claimants.

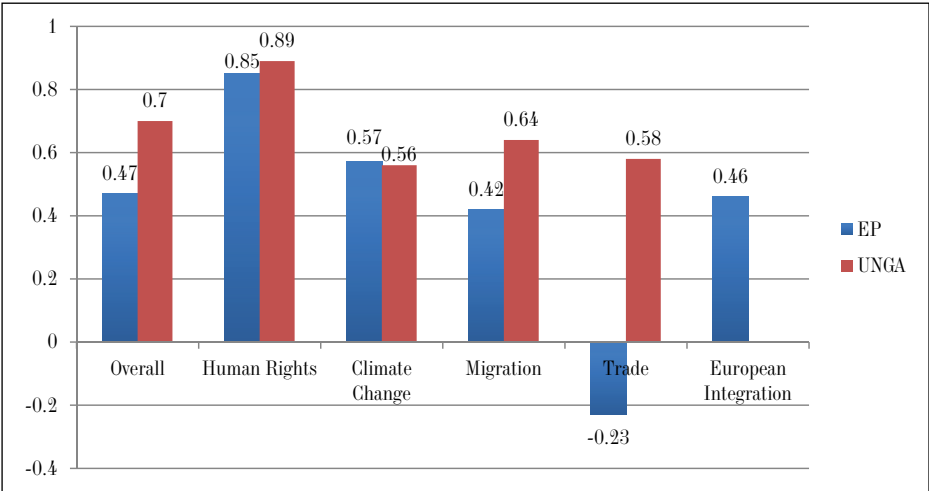
The subsequent WMMDU analysis was executed using the PREFSCAL algorithm available in SPSS, which, in relation to other forms of unfolding, successfully limits degeneracy (Busing et al., 2005). Degeneracy occurs if claimants with the same proximities to one of the poles would be located at different locations in the graph, reflecting multiple equally good solutions. The PREFSCAL algorithm has the additional major advantage that the assumption that the order of preferences is linear can be relaxed (Busing et al., 2010). Given the quasi-linear nature of the proximities, this accurately reflects the original data. The stress levels in the final solution are slightly higher than under the linear assumption as smaller differences in proximities are given comparatively higher weight in the solution than large differences. The measure of Kruskal's Stress-I subsequently rises as the proximity of an object in the solution differs from its raw proximity in the matrix, but it remains acceptable given the high ratio of objects placed in the solution compared to its dimensionality.

## Findings

As the results presented in the following show, there are major parallels in the observed patterns of positioning in both the UNGA and the EP, suggesting that claims-making on globalization issues in international assemblies follows an overarching logic. We present structured in-case comparisons documenting both the existence of conflict over globalization issues as a potential cleavage (expectation 1) and the predominance of pro-integration arguments over pro-demarcation arguments, that is, a cosmopolitan bias (expectation 2). To substantiate these expectations, we present the nature of systematic coalition formation on the issues within the two forums using WMMDU analysis. Subsequently, comparing the positions of UNGA and EP representatives and the positions of elected MEPs with those of unelected Commission members within the EP plenary, we analyse whether elected representatives defend less cosmopolitan positions than non-elected representatives (expectation 3). Finally, we assess the effect of proportional representation within the EP by comparing the positions of different party groups within it (expectation 4).

### *Existence and nature of globalization conflict in the UNGA and EP*

That globalization issues are debated and contested in both the UNGA and the EP is shown by an average of 17 and 35 claims per plenary transcript, respectively. That is, in the plenary debates, representatives actively make demands about either the opening up or the closure of borders. The distribution of claims in favour and against integration shows overall claims-making in both institutions is clearly pro-integrationist. The mean position (min. -1, max. 1) across all issue areas in the EP is .47 compared to a mean of .7 of all claims made in the UNGA. Thus, we find evidence supporting the expectation that conflict about globalization issues is mobilized within international organizations (expectation 1). At the same time, there is support for a cosmopolitan bias in this conflict in both institutions (expectation 2). More subtle similarities and differences are revealed



**Figure 1.** Mean positions overall and per issue area.

when assessing positions on the issue areas in the sample separately. The debate about human rights is extremely cosmopolitan in both forums, with means of .85 and .89. In other words, representatives in the UNGA or the EP hardly challenge the applicability or the need to enforce human rights around the globe publicly. In contrast, the only exception to the strong cosmopolitan dominance is the debates on trade within the EP, where the mean position is below .0 (see Figure 1).

In a second step, we assessed the degree of conflict in the two institutions and the different issue areas. Conflict could be evaluated, first, in terms of the mere presence of two opposing preferences voiced or, second, by the ‘depth’ of the conflict. In this respect, one could either measure the distance between the positions or relate the balance between pro-integrationist and pro-demarcationist positions compared to each other. In our case, the distance between the positions is somewhat static as we work with a fixed threefold indicator for position (demarcate, problem and integrate). For this reason, the measurement of conflict relies on the comparison of the relative frequency with which pro-integrationist and pro-demarcationist arguments are made. We operate with a measurement of depth of conflict that relies on a division of the number of the less frequent position (either demarcate or integrate) by the number of the most frequent position, receiving a measure between 0 and 1 — 0 indicating the total absence of conflict and 1 indicating maximum polarization.

Table 1 provides further evidence for the existence of conflict over globalization, while also showing that the four issue areas differ markedly regarding the degree of polarization. Trade presents the most polarized issue area in both institutions, followed by migration. Whereas the degree of polarization is much higher in the EP in both issue areas, the overall ordering of the issue areas according to the depth of conflict is comparable. In other words, human rights and climate change are treated as valence issues: there is no consensus on their salience so conflict exists between those attributing

**Table 1.** Measure of conflict overall and per issue area.

	Overall	Climate Change	Human Rights	Migration	Trade	European Integration
<b>EP</b>	<b>.29</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.02</b>	<b>.30</b>	<b>.56</b>	<b>.30</b>
<b>UNGA</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>.02</b>	<b>.12</b>	<b>.15</b>	<b>–</b>

salience to them and those who do not, rather than a contest over which policy to pursue (Green, 2007). Once representatives accept as a fact that human rights exist and are violated, the argument that something needs to be done about violations almost immediately follows. No one argues that human rights are violated and that this is a good thing. Instead, those who do not want to act against human rights violations either keep silent or argue that there are no human rights violations to begin with. In contrast, positional conflicts over migration and trade feature opposing policy demands. Some representatives argue in favour of free migration or more free trade, while others demand the exact opposite.

Meanwhile, both sides acknowledge that these issues are important and should be of common concern. As evidenced by the mean positions and the degree of polarization on these various policy issues, there is striking similarity between the UNGA and the EP in terms of which issues are valence issues and which are positional. Differences also remain, with stronger polarization in the EP than in the UNGA, to which we will return in the discussion.

Overall, this analysis shows that claimants in the EP are more likely to engage in conflictual claims-making on globalization issues and to defend opposing positions, whereas the UNGA delegates display a large degree of homogeneity on pro-integration claims. Yet, even in the UNGA, there are conflictual issue areas. They might be very unbalanced, but conflict is still present. On the other hand, even though the EP features significant conflict, there are exceptions, such as the human rights issue, where a cosmopolitan consensus dominates.

*Substantiating potential cleavage formation in the assemblies: WMMDU analysis*

To further investigate patterns in conflict, we investigate coalition formation in both assemblies. We ask: do we find groups of representatives that collectively advance or oppose either integration or demarcation on one or more of our policy fields? The answer to this question helps, first, to assess the plausibility of the mobilization of a cleavage around globalization issues, which systematically divides groups of representatives at international level. Second, it can help us assess our counterfactual on the effects of democratizing the UNGA or creating a new World Parliament by relating coherent cosmopolitan and communitarian positions to specific actors or coalitions. Here, we are interested not only in the extent of coalition formation on each of the five issues, but also in whether a coalition that advocates or opposes integration on one issue does the same on other issues, suggesting a more systematic division in the form of a



**Figure 2.** Joint plot of WMMDU in the UNGA.  
Notes: Kruskal's Stress-I: .205, Shepard's Rough Nondegeneracy Index: .818.

cleavage. To trace this, we map coalition formation and issue linkage and present our findings from the WMMDU.

Figures 2 and 3 visualize the results of the WMMDU — they show the issue poles as black dots and the claimants as white dots. Mean positions of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), G77 and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries in the UNGA<sup>4</sup> and the party families in the EP<sup>5</sup> are indicated by large white dots. Also, the graphs were inverted and/or rotated where necessary so that the horizontal X-axis reflects economic integration, with the integration pole of trade (Ti) to the right of the demarcationist pole (Td), and the vertical Y-axis reflects cultural integration, where the migration integration pole (Mi) is located above the migration demarcationist pole (Md) (cf. Kriesi et al., 2008, 2012), thereby facilitating comparison between the UNGA and EP solutions. Poles were not fixed so as not to make the apriori assumption that the issues of trade and migration are non-correlated, reflected in orthogonal dimensions. As both solutions show, however, they are, in fact, fairly orthogonal.



**Figure 3.** Joint plot of WMMDU in the EP.

Notes: Kruskal's Stress-I: .187, Shepard's Rough Nondegeneracy Index: .802.

In the case of the UNGA, we find that the vast majority of state representatives are located in the vicinity of the cosmopolitan poles on human rights (HRi), migration (Mi) and trade (Ti). A few disperse outliers including Russia, Tajikistan and Trinidad and Tobago are located closely to the communitarian poles on human rights (HRd) and trade (Td). Sierra Leone approaches the communitarian migration pole (Md). The fact that most states are located around the cosmopolitan poles visualizes the strong dominance of cosmopolitan discourse in the UNGA. To a limited extent, we find support for the notion that there is a conflict between 'the West' and 'the Rest' in the UNGA (Voeten, 2000) as 'the West' — with the exception of Israel — is unified around the cosmopolitan center, while 'the Rest' is widely dispersed across both the cosmopolitan center and the communitarian poles. Rather than resembling a North versus South conflict, however — as operationalized in the group of countries that are members of the OECD and the G77 — the 'Rest' opposing 'the West' is primarily the former East, as operationalized in the CIS. Still, cleavage formation in terms of



opposing coalitions mobilizing each camp clearly remains limited in the UNGA discourse, and even the comparatively demarcationist CIS countries are located fairly close to all integrationist issue poles.

In the case of the EP, this is clearly different. First of all, we find a one-dimensional constellation of issues, with the cosmopolitan poles of migration (Mi), European integration (EUi) and climate change (CCi) located together, and, similarly, their opposites (Md, EUd and CCd) together. Furthermore, while all party groups are obviously diffuse in terms of their member parties' positions, there is a clear pattern of their mean positions being organized along this one dimension. In this respect, it makes sense to speak of the existence of a cleavage systematically mobilizing cosmopolitan and communitarian positions. Closest to the cosmopolitan poles on these three issues we find the Greens followed closely by the social democratic Socialism and Democracy (S&D) group. Moving towards the middle of this dimension, we find the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and the socialist Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL), then come the conservative European People's Party (EPP) and European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), and, finally, closest to the communitarian poles, we find the Far Right Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD). All of these parties are close to the human rights cosmopolitan pole, indicating a lack of positional conflict on this issue. Trade turns out as an orthogonal and subordinate dimension.

Normally, Kruskal's Stress-I levels of .2 or lower are considered acceptable (Borg and Groenen, 2005: 48). However, given the high number of cases that clearly exceed 10 times the amount of dimensions in the solution, we accept Kruskal's Stress-I levels of just over .2 as adequate. Note further that non-degeneracy levels are remarkably high, well above the usually applied threshold of .7. We therefore accept these solutions as both theoretically and methodologically adequate representations of reality.

These findings imply that conflict formation on globalization — at least as manifest at the international level — does not primarily concern itself with globalization understood as free trade, international production and neoliberal doctrine, but instead relates to various facets of open, permeable borders (Held et al., 1999). In fact, the most orthodox issue related to globalization — trade — apparently does not even constitute a component of the main conflict in the EP, which instead builds on conflict over other international issues, such as climate change, migration and European integration. On the other hand, trade is the most contested issue in both assemblies in terms of the mean position advocated by all claimants. In the EP, unlike in the UNGA, we find a clear representation of alternative positions by the party groups. These party groups do not just present fairly coherent positions on these issues irrespective of the nationality of the subordinate member party, but they are also spread out along the dimension from complete cosmopolitanism to complete communitarianism. Arguably, therefore, the majority of citizens — who maintain predominantly more communitarian preferences — are better represented in the EP than in the UNGA. In the next section, we explore the extent to which democratic accountability can account for this.

**Table 2.** Mean position for Commissioners and MEPs across issue areas.

	Position	
	Mean	Count
<b>Commissioners</b>	.68	63
<b>MEPs</b>	.45	1180

*Effects of accountability mechanisms*

One important finding of the mapping of the debate in both the UNGA and the EP is the dominance of pro-integrationist or cosmopolitan claims in both institutions and in all issue areas, with the sole exception of the debate on trade in the EP, in line with our theoretical expectation 2. We propose that the lack of strong accountability mechanisms in international assemblies could be an explanation for this. The results presented here support that line of argument because this cosmopolitan dominance is weaker in the EP, where stronger accountability mechanisms are in place: whereas the representatives in the UNGA are appointed diplomats by nation-state governments that are only very distantly accountable to citizens — even if the state is a fully functioning democracy — MEPs are directly elected by EU citizens. Our findings show that these distantly accountable representatives in the UNGA make more cosmopolitan claims than their directly accountable counterparts in the EP (for all policy issues). The fact that this pattern holds across a wide range of issues lends strong support to expectation 3. To further substantiate our argument that the strength of accountability mechanisms matters and that the observed pattern is not just the function of the empowerment or regional nature of the EP, we present an intra-case comparative analysis within the EP debates, thus holding the institutional setting constant. We compare, first, the positioning of directly elected MEPs to those of more distantly accountable members of the European Commission to the extent that they participate in plenary debates within the EP.

Both directly elected MEPs and more distantly accountable members of the European Commission engage in claims-making in the EP. Members of the European Commission are regularly called to the EP to account for their actions in plenary, not unlike government members accounting for their actions in their parliaments in national parliamentary democracies. Our study has also documented the claims made by Commissioners to the extent that they are made in the plenary of the EP within our sampled transcripts of debates. Commissioners are appointed by the member states’ governments, and can thus be seen more as state delegates than as citizen representatives, even if their task is to defend the European interest, rather than the national interest. Whichever interest they consider themselves to be representing, which is beyond the present study to find out, they are not as directly accountable to citizens as MEPs are because they do not face direct elections.

Table 2 shows that members of the Commission clearly make more pro-integrationist claims than MEPs. This supports our expectation that it is the strength of accountability mechanisms that account for variance in claims-making since we control for the powers of the organization and its geographical scope. Even though these results need to be interpreted with caution due to the discrepancy in the number of claims in the two

**Table 3.** Mean position per party family, overall and per issue area.

	Overall	Climate Change	Human Rights	Migration	Trade	European Integration
<b>EFDD (Far Right)</b>	-.33 <sup>b</sup>	-.38	.53 <sup>a</sup>	-.50 <sup>a</sup>	-.30 <sup>a</sup>	-.45 <sup>b</sup>
<b>EPP and ECR (Conservatives)</b>	.43 <sup>b</sup>	.58 <sup>a</sup>	.78 <sup>b</sup>	.38 <sup>b</sup>	-.07 <sup>a</sup>	.42 <sup>b</sup>
<b>ALDE (Liberals)</b>	.61 <sup>b</sup>	.63	.86 <sup>b</sup>	.59 <sup>a</sup>	-.11 <sup>a</sup>	.70 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Greens</b>	.57 <sup>b</sup>	.78	.93 <sup>a</sup>	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	-.61 <sup>a</sup>	.88 <sup>a</sup>
<b>S&amp;D (Social Democrats)</b>	.74 <sup>b</sup>	.73 <sup>a</sup>	.93 <sup>b</sup>	.71 <sup>b</sup>	-.13 <sup>a</sup>	.81 <sup>b</sup>
<b>GUE-NGL (Socialists)</b>	.37 <sup>b</sup>	1.00	.93 <sup>a</sup>	.58 <sup>a</sup>	-.70 <sup>a</sup>	.35 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Overall</b>	.47 <sup>b</sup>	.57 <sup>b</sup>	.85 <sup>b</sup>	.42 <sup>b</sup>	-.23 <sup>b</sup>	.46 <sup>b</sup>

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Means computed from 10 to 50 claims. <sup>b</sup>Means computed from more than 50 claims.

categories of speakers, the results support our expectation 3. An independent samples T-test reveals that the difference between the mean positions of Commissioners and MEPs is significant (Sig. 2-tailed: .024).

### *Effects of proportional representation*

In order to assess expectation 4 regarding the effects of proportional representation on the degree of cosmopolitan bias, we perform a second intra-case comparison within the EP. Proportional representation has the effect of including a larger diversity in the party spectrum, and we expect that representatives of opposition and fringe parties will systematically hold different — and particularly more communitarian — positions than mainstream or government parties (cf. Hix and Lord, 1997). For this reason, we compare the positions of mainstream parties in the EP to the claims by the MEPs from fringe opposition parties. The latter's presence in the EP is largely a function of the multimember electoral districts — proportional representation — in the European electoral system.

The mean positions per party family support our expectation, especially when looking at the Far Right party family and their overall demarcationist positioning (–.33), which deviates considerably from the mean position in the EP. The other fringe group — the socialists — join the cosmopolitan mainstream on the issues of climate change, human rights and migration, but are relatively more communitarian on the issue of European integration, and extremely so on the issue of trade (see Table 3).

Despite a prominent presence of the Far Right in the EP, a bias towards cosmopolitanism prevails. When looking at the human rights issue area, we see that even the mean position of the Far Right party family is integrationist (.53). Whereas the socialist party shows the second most demarcationist mean position across all issues (.37), it nevertheless leans towards integration in absolute terms. Looking at the mean position in the different issue areas, the picture becomes even more diverse, with the socialists having one of the most integrationist positions in the human rights issue area and, at the same time, the most demarcationist when it comes to trade. Consequently, it is difficult to speak generally of a communitarian position in response to globalization. Still, the mean positions of claims by

the different party families in the EP correspond to the core values of the respective party family: the greens are most integrative when it comes to climate change; the liberals advocate open borders in the trade issue area. We also find a moderate correlation 0.190\*\* (Sig. 2-tailed: .000; N: 1277) between a position taken by a claimant and the respective party family. In sum, our results provide evidence to support the expectation that proportionality in the election system results in more communitarian voices within a transnational parliament, at least in the European case. Such effects of institutional design need to be assessed carefully when evaluating the creation of a global parliament.

### *Limitations and alternative explanations*

Our research design certainly suffers from limitations, which is why we refrained from performing rigid hypothesis testing. It was devised to provide a setting to evaluate the counterfactual of how the creation of a global parliament may be expected to play out. Our case selection of the EP and the UNGA is, hence, clearly a second-best option. Due to their various dimensions of variation other than direct election, alternative explanations cannot be ruled out.

It may be argued, for instance, that the nature of European governance to which the MEPs relate is different (i.e. much more integrated) than the global governance that UNGA members relate to. Since the EU already features high levels of integration, it may be simultaneously less advantageous to demand even more integration, and easier to pinpoint and criticize aspects of policy where integration has created negative side effects. It is, however, likely that a democratized UNGA or a new democratic World Parliament would not only be more directly accountable to the world's citizens, but also gain significant policy powers in a newly reinvigorated system of global governance. A democratically elected parliament beyond the state will not generate much legitimacy unless it has a meaningful say in policy-making. Similarly, directly elected parliamentarians in a new World Parliament are likely to claim the mandate to have strong policy influence, comparable to the behaviour of the EP in the way that it has gradually claimed significant powers since its creation (Rittberger, 2005). In that sense, this alternative explanation still brings the same lessons to those considering democratizing the UNGA. Through a combination of empowerment and democratization, which such institutional reform would entail, a stronger communitarian counter-voice is likely to enter the assembly, balancing its otherwise cosmopolitan bias.

Nevertheless, the European case is an imperfect trial space given the strong cultural homogeneity — compared to the whole world — the relatively unified party system and the fact that only democracies are included. Our results inform the debate on constituting a global parliament, but only the actual experiment is ultimately capable of answering the questions of how global democracy will play out and to what extent it would bring about cosmopolitan policies.

### **Conclusion**

One might expect that MEPs act as agents of cosmopolitanism in comparison to the government delegates of the UNGA. After all, they all hail from Western liberal democracies, are directly elected on a supranational mandate and do not have to represent the interests

of the state apparatus. The findings we present in this article, however, do not support such an expectation.

First, we show that conflict around globalization issues is mobilized (to some degree, in a one-dimensional manner) in both international assemblies, potentially constituting a new cleavage. This plays out to varying degrees in the two assemblies: our WMMDU analysis shows how the party groups in the EP are aligned along a single dimension on the issues of climate change, migration and European integration. There is partisan mobilization along the communitarian versus cosmopolitan dimension, with the greens vocalizing the most cosmopolitan position, the Far Right vocalizing the most communitarian position and all other party groups in between. However, this does not hold for trade — the classical globalization issue — which constitutes a different dimension in our results. In contrast, a similarly clear and divisive mobilization of the cleavage is lacking in the UNGA, where Western countries, with the exception of Israel, occupy a fairly coherent cosmopolitan mainstream but all other countries are widely dispersed between the cosmopolitan mainstream and various communitarian outlier positions.

Second, we showed that there is a cosmopolitan bias in both assemblies studied, although this is stronger within the UNGA. Third, by way of comparing the positions of elected and non-elected representatives, both between the assemblies and within the EP, we showed that stronger accountability mechanisms plausibly strengthen communitarian voice. Future studies should try to isolate further the effects of delegation mechanisms on the representation of cosmopolitan and communitarian positions. Vote analysis, content analysis of policy output or elite surveys of international organizations' staff could complement our findings and test this hypothesis further.

Fourth, we showed that installing a proportional system of representation is likely to increase the degree to which communitarian positions are expressed. Our evidence from an intra-case study of partisan positions within the EP testifies to this. Opposition and fringe parties within the EP hold systematically more communitarian positions than representatives of mainstream parties. Proportional representation allows a stronger presence of such fringe parties. This result may be particular to the European case, and may arguably even be reversed in authoritarian countries, if it is the case that the opposition is systematically more cosmopolitan within them. Still, the question of the effects of the voting system is of major importance for the debate on creating a World Parliament (Archibugi, 2010; Cohen and Sabel, 2006; Held, 2010).

Our findings carry significant implications for these discussions. As other scholars have shown (Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2014; Furia, 2005), cosmopolitanism is a 'minority ideology' among world citizens. The majority — in Europe, inclined to vote for Far Right populist parties, socialist parties or conservative parties — constitutes a communitarian core. The fact that these citizens are numerous and their interests are affected by the policies enacted by international organizations poses the question of whether they are represented in strong publics beyond the state. This is paramount from a perspective of democratic legitimacy that considers the principles of representative democracy to be somehow applicable to global governance. The strong cosmopolitan bias in the discourse of formal representatives in the UNGA and — to a more limited extent — the EP documented in this study do not, from this perspective, bode well. It means a significant part of citizens' preferences are not represented well enough in international organizations.

If the EP provides any glimpse into the empirical reality of a would-be World Parliament or a democratized and empowered UNGA, then we can expect a much stronger communitarian counter-voice to the cosmopolitan bias should such institutional reforms be enacted. More direct accountability mechanisms will likely force representatives to deviate less from the communitarian preferences of citizens than they currently do in the UNGA. If global elections were to be second-order to a similar extent that the European elections currently are, then the likelihood that communitarians enter into this would-be assembly would present itself even stronger. This is because opposition and fringe parties tend to do disproportionately well in second-order elections (Van der Brug and Van der Eijk, 2007), and these are exactly the parties most likely to voice communitarian positions.

A more powerful communitarian counter-voice in global governance that could be the result of creating a strong and democratic World Parliament may, subsequently, limit the extent to which the UN could enact cosmopolitan policies — assuming that the kind of public rhetoric that we have analysed is not disconnected from voting behaviour or other policy-formulation mechanisms. Ultimately, cosmopolitan democrats may be forced to choose. On the one hand, they could strive for cosmopolitan global governance centred on the individual as the ultimate unit of moral concern. To ensure respective policies of enforcing human rights, promoting mobility and protecting the global environment, these seemingly need to be enacted by a privileged global elite, safeguarded from direct accountability to the public. On the other hand, they could strive to democratize global governance, where strong mechanisms of delegation and accountability foster the enactment of the people's will. However, as our findings imply, this likely fosters a more powerful communitarian counter-voice that inhibits the cosmopolitan nature of global governance.

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### **Notes**

1. Transcripts of debates and resolutions are freely available online.
2. The relational nature of the claim, which is coded against the status quo as presented by the claimant, makes the claims directly comparable across different institutional settings. The topics discussed in both assemblies include national, regional and global problems, and in each case, the demands of the claimant in respect to his presentation of the current status quo are coded in terms of more or less integration.
3. In comparison to the original coding (De Wilde et al., 2014: 34–35), we have collapsed the categories of 'integration' and 'keep integrated' into a single 'pro-integration' category, the

- categories of 'problem' and 'no-problem' into a single 'neutral/ambivalent' middle group, and the categories 'demarcation' and 'keep demarcated' into a single 'pro-demarcation' category. This is done for reasons of parsimony and does not affect the results.
4. The OECD contains UN member states generally considered to be 'the West', including the US, Europe and allies; the G77 is the group of developing states; the CIS contains almost all countries formerly members of the Soviet Union. Almost all UN member states are a member of one and only one of these three groups. Exceptions include, most notably: Tajikistan (both CIS and G77) and Chile (both OECD and G77). They are excluded from the calculation of mean positions.
  5. Party families identified: Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE); European Peoples Party and European Conservatives and Reformists (EPP/ECR); Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD); Greens–European Free Alliance (GREENS-EFA); Confederal Group of the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL). Individual parties identified: Christlich Demokratische Union/Christliche-Soziale Union (cdu/csu), German conservatives; Conservative Party, UK (cons); Hungarian conservatives (fidesz); Front National (fn), French Far Right party; Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (fpö), Austrian Far Right; German greens (gruenen); UK social democrats (labour); Italian far right (lega nord); Die Linke (linke), German socialists; Moderata Samlingspartiet (moderata), Swedish conservatives; Miljöpartiet de Gröna (mp), Swedish greens; Il Popolo della Libertà (pdL), Italian conservatives; Partit Nazzjonalista (pn), Maltese conservatives; Parti Socialiste (ps), French social democrats; Partij van de Arbeid (pvda), Dutch social democrats; Partij voor de Vrijheid (pvv, ) Dutch Far Right; Socialni Demokrati (sd), Slovenian social democrats; Socialist Party (sp), Irish socialists; Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (spd), German social democrats; Sverigedemokraterna (sve), Swedish Far Right; United Kingdom Independence Party (ukip), UK Far Right; Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (ump), French conservatives; Vlaamse Liberalen en Demokraten (vld), Belgian liberals.

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